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Translation

Mgr Ximenes Belo: The East Timor people need local officials to set examples

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Bearing in mind the special nature of the Province of East Timor, development in this, the youngest province, will take a long time and proceed slowly. Besides the fact that E Timor is younger than the other 26 provinces, the fact that there are still some people who do not fully accept integration with Indonesia is another obstacle to the process of development. "This is why the people of E Timor need the local officials to set examples; it should not be allowed to happen that the East Timorese feel that the development budget is used for development activities in other places," said Tituler Bishop of Lorium, Mgr Carlos Ximenes Belo in an interview in Jakarta last Wednesday with *Kompas*.

Mgr Belo was on a visit to Jakarta for a few days, along with Markus Wanandi SJ, head of a private secondary school in Dili. [Wanandi is head of Sao Jose School, CB.] During their visit, they were received by Interior Minister, Rudini on Tuesday (20 March) They told Minister Rudini that the obstacle to development in East Timor was the ability of the community to develop itself. He said it was necessary to raise the quality of education and in this respect, the Church is working closely with the local government. According to Mgr Belo, the people of E Timor know that the Central Government devotes very much attention to developing E Timor. A very large budget is allocated to build E Timor. Responding to this gesture, the people of E Timor are ready to develop E Timor together with the government and the armed forces (ABRI), which is apparent from the speed of development, particularly regarding the road network and education in the towns and remote regions of E Timor.

Within ABRI, the main partner of the government and the Church, according to Belo, there are indeed good and bad people. This is quite normal; in the community too, there are good and bad people. There is nothing unusual about this. In the case of good ABRI people who build E Timor together with the people, when they are transferred from E Timor, the people weep to see them go. As for the bad ABRI people, quite a normal thing in any community, their departure will cause rejoicing among the people. The people will feel free from fear. Therefore, as he had told two infantry battalions in mid-March, the people of E Timor hope that ABRI will build E Timor together with the people. The people of E Timor need ABRI in the villages to help them raise their standard of living.

"The security approach should not be the only approach because the people have no enemies. The enemies of the people are in the bush and there are only a few hundred left," said Mgr Belo.

Freedom amd security

According to Belo, there is need for a sense of security and freedom, if E Timor is to be developed. If this is not there, the spontaneity to develop which is growing all the time will decline again. They want to be free to go anywhere. When it was mentioned that E Timor was opened up a year ago and people could go anywhere, Mgr Belo repled: "Not as they wish. Some regions are still closed." He added that it was probably for reasons of security that it was necessary to have a permit to enter these regions. But on the other hand, the fact that a permit was needed was interpreted by the people as meaning that there are limits to their freedom of movement.

With the presence of ABRI, the people hope that they will feel freer and more secure. By using the social approach, he said, reiterating the need not to rely only on the security approach, the people want to feel protected as development proceeds. "The social approach is the key to getting close to the

people of East Timor, an important part of speedily creating emotional integration," said Belo.

Speaking about emotional integration, he said that it was also extremely important for natives of E Timor to hold positions in the local administration. "Now, little by little, more and more E Timorese are being taken on as civil servants in the local administration," he said. He therefore strongly supports the policy of Governor Mario Carrascalao who has made it obligatory for any applicant for a job at the First Level Administration to have lived for at least three years in E Timor, and to prove this with his/her identity card (KTP).

"The numbers are not yet sufficient; we are waiting for many young people from the region who are completing their studies in Java, at the State Administration College (APDN) or various universities, who will occupy middle-ranking positions in E Timor," said Belo.

Things have changed

Comparing conditions in East Timor today with a few years ago, Mgr Belo said there had been many changes. The number of E Timorese who believe in the good intentions of the government has grown. For the vast majority of the people, integration is no longer a problem although there still are a few who are reluctant to accept integration with Indonesia as a fact. There is not yet a great enthusiasm about development of the region. They of course know who are the ones doing good and who have bad intentions.

When asked about the relation between Church and local government, he said that each has its own duty to perform. The government is in charge of social/political affairs while the Church works for the spiritual needs of the community. Hence, he said, the Church leadership will not want to be called upon to urge the community to do this or that. Their task is to provide material (information?) and direction on how the choices should be made; the choice must be left to the individual. The Church does not interfere in political matters. "In this question, there is a clear separation of duties and there is mutual understanding," said the Bishop, who was born in Baucau on 2 February 1948.

According to Belo, the first commitment of the Church is to upholding respect for the quality of people as human beings. This commitment to human beings was reinforced by Markus Wanandi, director of the Catholic Secondary School in Dili, who said this was the noble task of the Church. This is why the Church suffers when the standing the individual is not respected.

Speaking about E Timor's future, Mgr Belo said he felt optimistic that E Timor would surmount the fact that it lags behind. "But it will be a long and slow process," he said. What is needed is reconciliation, forgetting the past, forgetting past conflicts and facing the future. Reconciliation is indeed difficult, said Markus. With such specific problems, development in E Timor must give priority to raising the quality of education and this should be backed up by the investment of private capital in E Timor. "They are the ones who can provide work opportunities to the youngsters completing their schooling. If not, as the number of youngsters leaving school increases and the vacancies in the civil service remain limited, there will be large-scale unemployment in E Timor", said Belo.

With Markus expressing agreement, Belo hoped that private businessmen coming to E Timor would not only be interested in making profit; if they are only interested in profit, it will mean that they only employ skilled personnel and will do nothing about the transfer of skills. What is most needed at the moment is for people from outside E Timor to be willing to hand on their skills to the Timorese, in the same way that the transfer of technology is now under way in Indonesia.

Translated by C Budiardjo, TAPOL

Luisa,
Isn't this awful! Perhaps he's fed up - no response from de Cuellar + now from Soares.
Could you pass this round please
Also the Nujoma letter.

Thanks
Carmel

Love

Carmel Budiardjo

tapol
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